



News Release

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Franklin County Commissioners target 17 Abandoned Houses for Demolition, prevent Dragging Down of Home Values in Township Neighborhoods

Troubled by abandoned properties that concerned residents say have dragged down home values in several of their township neighborhoods, Franklin County Commissioners are targeting more than a dozen unsafe and unwanted houses for demolition - and this is only the beginning.

On Wednesday, County Commissioners joined in the first of a series of new federally-funded housing demolitions as part of Franklin County's Township Nuisance Abatement Demolition Program, starting with a crime-magnet property in Mifflin Township.

The abandoned house at 2096 Minnesota Avenue has attracted several criminal incidents and unwelcome squatters in recent years, and according to township code enforcement officers, it has dramatically dragged down property values for nearby residents and kept officers busy because of safety concerns.

By month's end, demolition crews will turn the property into open and safe green space.

Federal funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - and a partnership with the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) - will allow Franklin County to repeat this turnaround by demolishing a total of 17 abandoned houses this summer in Mifflin, Clinton, Franklin, Hamilton and Madison townships.

"Abandoned properties drag entire neighborhoods down. We want our children to be safe and families secure, and property values to be protected," said Franklin County Commissioner President Paula Brooks. "That is why we are taking these actions to strengthen this Franklin County neighborhood. Our senior citizens deserve to see their homes retain their value as an added nest egg, too."

"Because they affect so many other conditions, such as safety and home value, abandoned properties can unravel the quality of life in a neighborhood and dim the outlook of its residents," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown, who also serves as board chair of MORPC. "Working closely with our partners in the townships and in our cities, MORPC and Franklin County are aggressively pursuing ways to remove these dangerous eyesores and help communities in rebuilding their housing markets in a positive and thoughtful manner."

"Nothing signals neglect more than a street peppered with overgrown and abandoned houses. Not only are they health and safety hazards, these neglected properties destabilize the sense of neighborhood for anyone living close by," added Commissioner John O'Grady. "These demolitions are just the start of stabilizing these township neighborhoods, restoring community pride, and convincing others to come in and reinvest."

Franklin County is investing \$320,000 in community development federal funding to demolish 17 buildings this year.

County Commissioners also play an active role in the new Franklin County Land Reutilization Corporation, appointing the majority of members to the board of this new land bank - which allows the County to quickly act on blighted, vacant, and tax-delinquent properties.

Franklin County's land bank was recently awarded \$8.2 million from the Ohio Attorney General's Office for the demolition of vacant and abandoned residential buildings. These grant funds - combined with demolition funds from the County and City of Columbus - will add up to approximately \$16 million in countywide demolitions, which could lead to the removal of more than 1,200 blighted residential properties.